

Widowed Catholics find friends in NAIM

By C.L. Ruggenstein
staff writer

All of a sudden you're alone. There's no one to do things with, things you used to do together before — going to dinner, to the movies, for walks or to just talk to. The life built around a deceased spouse is gone and, along with it, the comforting companionship of everyday life.

Such has been the experience of Bernice Barduca, and many other widows and widowers who belong to group called NAIM.

NAIM is a special outreach of the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit and serves as a support group to surviving spouses. NAIM seeks to fill the void for companionship.

"The first thing we need to go out for coffee," Barduca, a member of the Rochester NAIM chapter, said. "With NAIM, you can get out your list and call someone to just talk."

THE GROUP, started about 25

years ago in downtown Detroit by Monsignor Clifford Sawyer, has grown to six chapters throughout the metropolitan Detroit metropolitan area.

Sawyer named it for a city in a familiar Gospel story, said the archdiocese's Family Life director, Bud Ozar. At the city of Naim, Jesus stopped a funeral procession and raised the only son of a widow from the dead.

"It's an extension of the compassion Jesus had in the Gospel, and we're extending that today through NAIM," Ozar said.

"The basic thrust of the group is friendship and companionship through social, educational and spiritual activities."

THE ACTIVITIES are many. "It's incredible," said Ozar with a laugh. "A good part of their monthly meetings is just getting their calendar straight."

A member of one chapter is enti-

'You don't even need to go out for coffee. With NAIM, you can get out your list and call someone to just talk.'

— Bernice Barduca
Rochester member

looking for — somebody to do things with."

Barduca had married at 18, had her three children by 24, and was widowed at 51. Never having worked outside the home, she had built her life around her husband and family.

She got involved with the Rochester NAIM group and has served in several capacities, including activities chairman for two years. And she found a new friend whom she travels with.

Ozar was born in Wales and I was born in the Upper Peninsula, and we were amazed at the similarities of our experiences," she said. They're so amazed that they're planning a harvest festival dinner for the Rochester chapter like the festivals

they remember from their home towns.

"You never get over the every day loneliness" of the loss of a spouse, Barduca said. But with friends to share it, it does get easier.

NAIM's chapters are Wayne, Macomb, Rochester, Oakland, Belle River and Downriver. They're planning a special Day of Recollection in Wayne on Nov. 12, and the Pope John Paul II Center with a trip to a local restaurant afterwards.

"It'll be an opportunity to look at the losses they have in common," said Ozar.

For more information about NAIM, contact Rev. Syl Taube at the Family Life Office of the Archdiocese of Detroit, 237-5892.

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